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*The Danger of Bad Company with respect to
our Obedience to God: Or, The Impossibi-
lity of their keeping God's Commandments
that keep Bad Company:*

Plainly and Familiarly set forth

IN A
SERMON

Preach'd in the Parish Church of

BISLEY

IN

Gloucestershire,

July the 23d, 1710.

By SIMON PRIEST, M. A. Vicar
of BISLEY.

L O N D O N,

Printed and Sold by J. Downing in Bartholomew-Close
near West-Smithfield, 1710.

Price Two Pence.

693.2.8
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T H E
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

Good Reader,

TH E R E is nothing in the ensuing Discourse, that can pretend to recommend it to the World, but its Plainness and Hopeness. And yet it is such, that if received and read with Candour equal to the Sincerity with which it is sent forth, it may, I hope, be of some good use, and answer the End for which it was compos'd, viz. the promoting God's Glory, by removing one of the greatest Obstacles that lie in Mens way to their Duty, and securing such an Obedience to the Divine Precepts as is indispensably required of every Christian, and without which Eternal Happiness is not to be obtained.

That God would therefore be pleased to give a Blessing to it, and prosper the good work undertaken therein, is the hearty Prayer of the Author, who is a sincere Well-wisher to the Courteous Reader, and all other his Fellow-Christians.

Psalm CXIX. Ver. 115.

*Depart from me, ye Evil-doers; for I will
keep the Commandments of my God.*

THAT Obedience is, owing from the Creature to the Creator; that it is the Prerogative of God; who made and governs the World, to enact and set forth Laws, to give Precepts or Commandments, and the Duty of Man to observe and practise what God hath commanded, is a common Principle of Reason innate to Mankind, and so generally known and acknowledged by all. And that this Obedience to God, and keeping his Commandments, is the Condition of Man's future Happiness and Salvation, we are taught by Religion, in the sacred Volumes of the Old and New Testament.

Wherefore, in the Prosecution of this Subject, I shall not insist upon either of these Heads, the Reasonableness or Necessity of obeying God, and keeping his Commandments; though without all doubt, it was from the Consideration of these chiefly that David set up his pious and holy Resolution in the latter part of this Verse.

But I shall insist upon something else, altogether as material, and fit to be known by

every Christian, and I think more proper and genuine to the whole Text, and of more natural consequence and deduction from it. *Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the Commandments of my God, saith the Royal Prophet.*

In which Words he declares his pious purpose to keep God's Commandments; and in order to his better performing this, he renounceth the Company and Conversation of wicked Men, as a great Hindrance and Impediment to his doing what he had resolved upon. As if he had said, I will, I am fully bent and set upon it, as a matter of my Duty and greatest Interest, I will keep the Commandments of my God; and therefore, or for this Reason, I charge and command all you that lead wicked Lives, in the notorious Breach and Violation of God's Commandments, to depart from me, and never more to come near me, so long as you continue in your evil Courses; because such Company will be both an *Offence* and an *Hindrance* to me. I shall be concerned and scandalized to see you wickedly abuse and affront that God whom I resolve to serve by a sincere and hearty obedience; and besides, I am afraid lest by such Bad Company I my self should be corrupted and drawn away from my holy Resolution of keeping God's Commandments, or at least much let and hindred in the Performance of it.

This I take to be the true and full Sense and Importance of the Words, and from them

them thus explained there ariseth, and that most naturally, this Doctrine or Proposition, viz. That *he that will resolve to keep God's Commandments himself, to live an holy and religious Life, must at the same Time resolve to renounce and cast off bad Company, utterly to abhor and avoid the Conversation of wicked and ungodly Men.*

This is the Point, that is to be the Subject of our following Discourse; in treating upon which, I shall endeavour these two Things;

First, To shew that bad Company, or the Conversation of wicked Men, is offensive and nauseous to every one that is zealous for God's Glory, and resolved to keep his Commandments.

Secondly, To acquaint you with the contagious Influence of Bad Company, and in what respects it is, and must needs be, an hindrance to any good Man in the Discharge of his Duty. Or, if you will, more plainly thus, viz. that it is impossible for him that keeps bad Company, to keep God's Commandments as he ought.

The first Part of my undertaking is to shew you, that Bad Company, or the Conversation of wicked Men, is offensive to every one that is zealous for God's Glory, and

conversation of the wicked; and that that righteous Man dwelling among them, i. e. the wicked Sodomites, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day, with their unlawful deeds, 2 Ep. II. v. 7, 8.

Where there is a difference in Principles, and what is consequent to that, in Practice, there can be no Agreement in Conversation. Now a truly godly Person, that hath a right Sense of Religion, and is thoroughly affected with it, is acted by a divine Principle, the Grace and Spirit of God, and by this animated and stirred up to all purity and holiness of Life, to the Performance of his whole Duty to God, his Neighbour and Himself. But Evil-doers, the Workers of Iniquity, wicked and ungodly Men, void of Religion, and having no fear of God before their Eyes, are acted by a contrary, a carnal Principle, the impulse of corrupt Nature, prompted and spurred on by the Instigation of the Devil to all the various Villanies they commit.

Upon which Account, it were as likely to reconcile *Light* and *Darkness*, *Christ* and *Belial*, yea, to bring *Heaven* and *Hell* together, (notwithstanding the great Gulph that is fixt between them, St. Luk. XVI. 26.) as to make any of Conversation between the *Righteous* Person, him that is resolved that is resolved to break God's The one will wick-ze

the Conscience of him that is Zealous for God's Service and Glory, and it will grieve and vex his Spirit to see the great Lord, whom he adores, abused and set at nought by perverse and obstinate Sinners.

It would be a strange kind of Consort, that should be composed of the *Prayers* and *Praises* of the one, and the *Curses* and *Imprecations* of the other; to hear the one talk lewdly and obscenely, whilst the other is reading the Holy Scripture, or some other good Book of Devotion. Such a medly as this would startle the most steady and constant Man alive, and make him astonished and amazed, as a Thing most incongruous and unnatural. And therefore no good Man that can help it, will ever endure it, but with *David* in the Text, abandon and drive away the wicked from him.

With the same pious King, *Psal. CI. v. 3.* he will *bate the Work of them that turn aside. A froward Heart, v. 4. shall depart from him, and he will not know, i. e. have any familiarity with, or shew any countenance to, a wicked Person. Whoso privily slandereth his Neighbour, him will he cut off, and not suffer him that hath an high look and a proud Heart, v. 5. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in his House; he telleth lies shall not tarry in his Sight, v. 8. he will do all he can to root out all Wickedness from them to*

the same City with him. And all this with good Reason, if we consider what it is

The second part of my undertertaking to acquaint you with; the Contagious Influence of Bad Company, and in what respects it is, and must needs be an hindrance to any good Man in the Discharge of his Duty; or that it is impossible for him that keeps Bad Company, to keep God's Commandments as he ought.

It is most certainly true what the Apostle hath observed and told us, 1 Cor. XV. 33. *viz. that Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* Bad Company is the Devil's Decoy to allure and draw Men into Sin. And there is a Sort of People in the World, (I wish they be not the Majority of it) who seem to be sent from Hell, on purpose to promote the Interest of the Prince of Darkness, and enlarge the Borders of his Empire and Dominion. Persons of corrupt and pernicious Principles, and loose and vicious in their Lives and Practice; who have grossly erred from the true Faith, and are to every good work reprobate.

Such as these I mean by Bad Company, and these are dispersed all the World over; where you will, you will be sure to meet of these *Imps* of Satan, his rank and all from with all manner of designed by infect, and

and destroy the *Sheep* of Christ. And this they will most certainly do, unless they take heed and beware of them, unless they decline all Friendship and familiar Conversation with them, and shun and abhor them as the pest and bane of Mankind. For Sin is catching, and spreads like a Canker or Gangreen, or rather Leprosie, diffusing it self from one to many ; and all that come within the Breath of an Atheistical, Profane, debauch'd, Lewd and Vicious Person, are in danger of being poisoned and undone by it.

Thus the Children of *Israel* were no sooner mingled among the *Heathen*, but they learn'd their Works, Psal. CVI. v. 35. And what the Works were which they learned of them, we have expressed, v. 36, 37. viz. *Idolatry*, and the most barbarous and inhumane *Murder*; for they served and worshipped their Idols, and sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto them; unto Devils got into, and giving their Oracles from or out of the carved, or graven, or molten Images made by the Heathen to these wicked Purposes.

So that here you see, by associating themselves with these Pagan People, the *Israelites* came presently to break two of God's Commandments, the *First* of the first Table, and the *Second* of the Second, committing *Idolatry*; and as if that had not guilt enough in it to make it loathsome and odious in the Sight of the true God, staining and polluting it with the *Murder* of their own Children, strip-

stripping themselves at once of piety and humanity.

And if Bad Company can once bring Men to this, to the Commission of such horrible Wickedness as is here mentioned, and which is as much against the Principles of reasonable Nature, as the Precepts of the true Christian Religion, to be sure it will prevail in all other Matters, and by its pernicious Influence draw us into Sins of all sorts, which Reason not quite so much abhors, and to which our corrupt Affections are more prone and inclined.

Upon which Account, he can be neither a dutiful Child to his natural Parents, nor a good and loyal Subject to his Prince or Civil Governour, nor honour his Father and Mother in any Sense the Fifth Commandment is capable of, and obligatory to us, that shall with any delight or Satisfaction converse with, and hearken to the Discourses of a certain sort of Men in our Age, who make it their chief Study and endeavour to null and invalidate the Force of it, especially in its *civil Acceptation*, by all the cunning and artifice they can.

And because they themselves have imbibed that vile and unchristian Principle, of the *Lawfulness of resisting the higher Powers*, (to whom God hath absolutely, and without any Restriction or Exception, that we can find, either expressed in his sacred Word, or rationally deduced from it, commanded us to be Subject, upon pain of *eternal Damnation*; looking upon our resisting them, as resisting him-

himself; yea, and plainly and openly terming it so, *Rom. XIII. 2.*) I say, these Men, because they themselves have imbibed this Principle, Scoff at, and Ridicule all those that will not join and concur with them, as very Fools, Enemies to their Country, and stupid Transgressors of their great Principal, and to them, most sacred Law of *Self-Preservation*, to which they would in all Cases have all other Laws, *Divine and Humane*, to submit.

To effect which, they make no scruple to wrest and strain the most plain and positive Texts of Scripture, that seem to thwart their Design, to such Senses and Interpretations as shall best serve their turn, though such as the Apostles and first Preachers of the Doctrines contained in them, never intended or thought of, and to which their Practice, their constant Practice whilst they lived, was diametrically opposite, and the contrary to which many of them sealed and confirmed with their Blood, and testified and maintained even unto Death their sincerity in teaching, and the truth of what they taught others, and prescribed to be done by them.

By this way of Jugling have these crafty Men beguiled many poor, ignorant, unstable and unwary Souls, that would hearken to them, and drawn them to their Party; and so diffused and propagated their pernicious Principles to every corner of this Kingdom. So that from hence, from our own sad Experience in this Particular, as well

as from what was said before, we may learn, what I undertook to acquaint you with, the contagious Influence of bad Company.

The next thing that I propose to do, is to give you an account of the Nature of this Contagion, or how it comes to pass, that Bad Company hath such influence upon all that enter themselves into it, as to make them as wicked and profligate as they are.

It is, and must be confess'd by all sober Christians, that some seeds of natural Corruption still remain, even in the best of Men, and will do so as long as they live upon Earth. So long as they are encompassed with Flesh and Blood, this *terrene Tabernacle*, they will be subject to the Infirmities of it, apt sometimes to fall into Sin, let them be as careful and cautious as they can; and there is no such thing as perfect unfinning Obedience possibly to be performed by us on this side the Grave, nor indeed so much as expected or required of us by God under the Gospel-dispensation. If we be sincere, and do what we can, and repent, and be sorry for what we have not done as we ought, and endeavour for the future to amend whatsoever hath been amiss, this will be accepted by God through Christ.

But we cannot attain to so much as this, by the Power and Strength of mere Nature; nothing but the Grace and Spirit of God can assist us herein, or enable us to perform this sincere, though imperfect obedience the Gospel requires

quires of us ; and that must be by their continual presence and influence upon our Hearts, subduing and keeping under our depraved Appetites and Affections, that would hurry us on to Sin, and stirring up and exciting us to our Duty.

And so long as we hearken to, and obey the Motions of this our heavenly Guide, we are safe enough ; for so long it will dwell in and accompany us, and keep our corrupt Passions in such Subjection, that Sin shall never get the full and absolute Dominion over us. But then we must remember, that among other Directions of the Spirit of Grace, this is one, that we be careful to avoid all Occasions of, and Temptations to Sin, of which we have shewed the keeping Bad Company not to be the least.

For which reason this holy Spirit in several Places of Scripture, hath given us a particular charge to avoid that Temptation, and not to have any Conversation with wicked and ungodly Men, telling us what danger we are like to be in from such Companions. Thus Prov. I. 10. it counsels us *not to consent to the enticing of Sinners ; and v. 15. not to walk in the way with them, but to refrain our Feet from their Path.* The Danger and Destruction of which their *Ways* and *Paths* is expressed, v. 18. as their Wickedness was v. 16. And Isaiah LII. 11. quoted by St. Paul, 2 Cor. VI. 17. God calls upon his People to *come out from among the wicked, to separate themselves from*

from them, and not to touch or meddle with any of their Abominations, and promiseth to receive them upon their hearkening to him in this particular.

And if they do so, he will be as good as his Word, otherwise he will reject and forsake them; neither will his holy Spirit abide with them in such Bad Company, and then they will be sure to be ruin'd and undone by it.

For then the Contagion will presently seize them, the Seeds of Corruption, of natural Corruption in them, which were before stifled and kept under by the Spirit of Grace, upon its deserting them, will gather strength, and by the bad Discourses and Examples of wicked Men, be stirred up and improved to a great Bulk, so that they shall be as ready to receive all manner of evil, as the others are to infill it into them. Then thus naked and unguarded, they will readily swallow all the Baits of the Devil, offered to them by the Hands of his Servants; then any Argument brought against Religion, as a sour and melancholy Profession, depriving Men of all the Pleasures and Interests of this World, and feeding them only with the vain Hopes of something in Reversion in the next, shall be accepted and embraced as a just Cause of their renouncing it. And then also the present Delights and Advantages of a loose and licentious Life, represented in their choicest Colours, as an Encouragement for them to enter upon it, shall be greedily snatch'd at,

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as the highest Pitch of Man's Felicity. Especially when recommended, as they always are, under the Pretence of the greatest Love and Friendship, and by the Practice and Example of those who pretend to be their Friends, and declare, that by these Motives they themselves were first perswaded to embrace this way of living, and that they still continue in it, and resolve to do so, because they have had a long and repeated experience of the Pleasures and Benefits of it. Thus by disparaging the Ways of God, and highly extolling and magnifying the Ways of Sin, do these *Factors* of Satan delude and entice others into their Society.

And when, as was before observed, a Man is forsaken by the Spirit of God, that will not attend him in such lewd and vicious Company; (from which it warned him to refrain) and when corrupt Nature grows predominant in him upon this Account, (being now set free from its former restraints) and regards more what is pleasing to Sense, than what is agreeable to Reason and Religion, no wonder, if as rotten Seeds or Fruits taint and corrupt others that lie next to them, and an unsound Sheep spreads its Contagion over a whole Flock; so he that freely and familiarly joins himself to the Company of wicked Men, be presently stained with their abominable Principles and Practices, and grow on a sudden as great a Proficient in all the Arts and Mysteries of Iniquity as any of them. The wonder would

would be, if it were not so; as great a wonder, as if he that *toucheth Pitch* should not be *defiled therewith*.

And thus have I shewed you not only that, according to St. Paul, 1 Cor. XV. 33. *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*, but also why and how they come to do so; how the Infection comes thus to spread from one to another. It is by the Force and Influence of the Bad Discourses and Bad Examples of old experienc'd Sinners, working upon the Heart and Affections of a Man, when he hath lost the Guard of God's Grace and Spirit, and hath nothing but corrupt Nature left in him, which is ready to meet them half way, and embrace any Doctrine or Principle that seems to favour and give Countenance to a sensual and voluptuous Life.

It now only remains, that I make some useful and practical Observations from what hath been said upon the whole matter; and to that I now proceed.

The Doctrine or Proposition that I raised from the Words was this, *viz.* that *he that will resolve to keep God's Commandments himself, to live an holy and religious Life, must at the same time resolve to cast off Bad Company, utterly to abhor and avoid the Conversation of wicked and ungodly Men.* In the Management of which, I undertook these two Things:

First, To shew, that Bad Company, or the Conversation of wicked Men, is offensive and

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nauseous to every one that is Zealous for God's Glory, and resolved to keep his Commandments.

Secondly, To acquaint you with the contagious Influence of Bad Company, and in what respects it is, and must needs be an hindrance to any good Man in the Discharge of his Duty. Or, if you will more plainly thus, *viz.* that it is impossible for him that keeps Bad Company, to keep God's Commandments as he ought.

The first Part of my undertaking, and which, I hope, hath been effectually performed, was to show, that Bad Company, or the Conversation of wicked Men, is offensive and nauseous to every one that is Zealous for God's Glory, and resolved to keep his Commandments. So it was to *David* in the Text, and so it was to *righteous Lot*, as I acquainted you in the former part of this Discourse.

Now from hence I shall observe to you, in the first Place, that we may very reasonably judge what a Man is, by the Company he keeps. For, as was shewed before, there can be no great Harmony in Society, where Men are of different Humours and Principles; no Agreement in Conversation, where there is a contrariety in Judgment and Opinion, and consequent to that, a contrariety in Practice; and the Lives and Actions of Men stand in direct Opposition to one another. For then that which pleaseth the one, displeaseth the
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other, and in such a Case Men will rather divide and separate, than associate and come together.

From whence it is evident and certain beyond all doubt, that where you find any number of Men holding correspondence, frequently meeting together, and never thinking themselves so happy, as when they are in each others Company, they are all of the same Stamp, either the Servants of God, or the Vassals of Satan. For what should a devout *Hermit* do in a throng of petulant, wanton *Satyrs*? What a Sober, Righteous and Godly Man among a Crew of dissolute Persons, *Adulterers, Thieves, Smealers*, and such like? Their leud Examples, and profane and obscene Discourses, would grate hard upon his Eyes and Ears, and afflict his Heart; and his grave Deportment would be altogether as offensive to them, and be ridicul'd by them as Foolish and Singular. To be sure they would take it very heinously if he, being but one, should, out of his Zeal for God's Glory, pretend to reprove them for their Wickedness; such a Correction would be thought an unpardonable Rudeness by all the Company. And therefore such different Tempers will keep from one another as much as they can, nothing but uneasiness attending their coming together. For which reason a good Man will always make choice of Good Company, and a Bad Man of such as is most agreeable to him.

Secondly,

Secondly, From hence I observe, That every Man that consults his Credit, and would bear the Character of a godly and religious Person, which every profess'd Christian should be very desirous and tender of, must be Cautious of his Company, take care whom he admits to his Familiarity and Acquaintance. For as was before observed, the Worlds will judge of him, and that most justly, by this Rule, and esteem him such as those whom he most frequently converseth with.

But, *Thirdly*, there is a Consideration beyond all this, which requires his greatest Care and Circumspection in this Matter, *viz.* that his Eternal welfare or misery depends upon it. For unless he resolve with *David* in the Text, to keep God's Commandments, and do as he resolveth, he must never expect to go to Heaven, but shall be condemn'd to the Regions of Darkness and everlasting Torments. He that will enter into Life, must keep the Commandments, St. *Mat.* XIX. 17. and without Holiness, i. e. a sincere Performance of all the Gospel-Duties, no Man shall see the Lord, i. e. be happy in the Enjoyment of him in the other World, *Heb.* XII. 14. And the Tenour of the whole Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, runs to this same purpose.

But as I acquainted you in of my undertaking, it is in that keep *Bad* Comm for

it is, and must needs be, as was shew'd in several respects, a great hindrance to any good Man in the Discharge of his Duty. And therefore one may as well expect to preserve and secure his Health in a *Pest-House*, among those that lie there Sick of the Plague, as to keep up his Innocence, and hold fast his Integrity, his zeal and concern for God's Glory, in a Crowd of dissolute and profligate Wretches, that have utterly renounced God and all Goodness, and given themselves over to all manner of Wickedness.

For let him be never so good a Man, if he once associate himself with such, his Goodness will quickly vanish and expire; yea, it began to decay, when he first began to incline to their Company; and after his Continuance in it for a while, will be quite extinct, and he himself as bad as the worst of them. Then God's Commandments will be no more thought of by him, unless it be to break and violate them. His leud Companions will fill his Head with new and strange Notions, and by mingling a little Wit now and then with their profane Communication, *gild the poisoned Pill*, make it go down glib and smooth, and infect and ruine the Heart, while it seems to cherish it.

Religion shall be thought quite another thing than it was before, a cheat and a snare, and 'twould to debar Men of the world, and he
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now he is acquainted with another sort of living, more grateful to Sense, and giving greater indulgence to a brutish Appetite. Thus is a poor Man deluded into Sin and Destruction, let down to Hell as it were in a Feather-Bed; and whilst he delights himself in the jolly Conversation of the wicked, and partakes with them in all their sensual Enjoyments, he is, though he thinks not of it, riding post to the Devil, and hasting to the Black Regions of everlasting Misery.

O let this Consideration awaken us all, and as we love our Souls, and consult their eternal well-being in another World, make us hate and avoid the Company of wicked Men, as, what it is indeed, the most Contagious and deadly Pestilence.

And let no regard to the Quality or Condition of any Persons, or their Relation and Affinity to us, engage us into their Conversation, when they are known to be Strangers or Enemies to God, and not to be reclaim'd by the Force of either good Example or Advice. All that can be done, is only to pray to God for them, and we have but very small Encouragement to do that, 1 Joh. V. v. 16. at the close of it. When Men are once become Apostates, they make our Petitions to Heaven for them languid and hopeless, ineffectual and unacceptable, if not something worse. In such Cases therefore we must renounce even those that are nearest of kin to us.

Under the old Law, there is a command
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from God, that if a Mans Brother, the Son of his Mother, or his Son, or his Daughter, or the Wife of his Bosom, or his Friend, which is as his own Soul, should entice him secretly, and endeavour to draw him to Idolatry, Deut. XIII. 6. he should be so far from consenting to him, that he must not conceal him, but be the first that should lay his Hand upon him, in order to put him to Death, v. 8, 9. It is no matter how nearly allied any one is to us, if he be a Reprobate, and an Alien from God. David professeth to hate them that hate God, and that with a perfect Hatred, accounting them his own Enemies, Psal. CXXXIX, v. 21, 22. And here in the Text he deals with them as such, and bids all Evil-doers to depart from him.

And let us follow his Example, and not love Sin for the Sinners Sake, but hate and avoid the Sinner for the Sake of his Sin. For unless we do this, we shall certainly forsake, what we ought always to adhere to, God and his Commandments, which, as hath been demonstrated, it is impossible for those to keep, that keep Company with wicked Men.

One sort of which ought for this Reason especially to be avoided by us; I mean such as play fast and loose with the Precepts of the Gospel, with some Duties which God hath there commanded us to practise. For instead of the necessity of performing them, they urge the Lawfulness of the contrary Practice, and condemn them for Fools, that stand up for the Conscientious Discharge of them; and this al-
though

though *eternal Damnation* be threatned to those that discharge them not. They own indeed that such a *particular Precept*, *Rom. (XIII. v. 1, 2.)* might be of some force, some obliging force, in former Times, in the Days of Yore, some Centuries ago; but that now the Case is quite altered, and it cannot pass now, not being suitable to the *present Establishment*, to the *Constitution of our State*, (though the matter and substance of it be the avowed Doctrine of our Church) and that we must, if we be wise, if we have any regard to our *English Liberty and Property*, do sometimes the contrary to what that hath enjoined.

Precious Saints indeed! that make Religion truckle to secular Interest, and own nothing for Gospel, but what suits with their ease and worldly Convenience. At this rate we must kick out *Mortification, Self-denial*, and *taking up the Cross*; for they also are four Duties, tedious to Flesh and Blood, and not to be endured, if all things must go according to that Standard. And yet our Saviour hath told us, that he that doth not (and that too cheerfully and readily) perform these Duties, whensoever he is called to it, *cannot be his Disciple*, *St. Mat. XVI. 24. St. Luk. XIV. 27, 33.* And I am sure that none but his Disciples shall ever enter into his Kingdom. You see then what these Men by their Artifice and cunning Insinuations would lead us to.

But I tell them, and you, my Brethren, and observe well what I say, that these above-mentioned,

tioned, and all other Precepts of the Gospel, are *Moral*, and of *perpetual Obligation*. What was the Duty of a Christian a Thousand Years ago, is so still: These are Things that must not be altered in Conformity to the Times, but all Times and Ages must conform to them.

Wherefore to conclude, Let us not hearken to, nor be persuaded by these or any other sort of Seducers, that endeavour to draw us off from our Obedience to God. But let us resolve with holy *David* in the Text, *to keep his Commandments*, in spite of all their Solicitations to the contrary. And to avoid their Temptations, let us avoid their Company, and associate our selves with those that make more Conscience of their ways, and have a greater Respect and Reverence for God and his Word.

For the same Company that we keep here, we shall eternally keep hereafter; if *Good*, in Heaven; if *Bad*, in Hell, the Place prepared for the wicked, for all that forget and disobey God.

Now to God the Father, &c. Amen.

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